177 178 the thoroughly civilized centers, but the European elements are so much more numerous that Indian culture has there quite disappeared as such.

This trend has occasionally been checked or reversed temporarily, but in [179] the long run it seems to be inevitable. If Fray Ramón Bueno's Camaracotos were the ancestors of our Kamarakotos, they had in some respects been as much affected by European culture by 1800 as they have again now, and in the meantime reverted to a definitely more aboriginal condition. Whether true of this tribe or not, such was the history of some tribes as the conquistadors and missionaries advanced in the Orinoco Basin and then retreated again. Now another forward movement is well under way and the usual forward trend is re-established and is likely to be permanent.

000 Supposing that this trend continues, as it will unless checked by unpredictable disaster, the eventual complete "Venozolanization" of the Kamarakotos is inevitable in the usual, unguided course of social evolution, a result that means the certain extinction of Kamarakoto culture and the possible extinction of the Kamarakotos themselves, surely the loss of their identity. This final result can hardly eventuate before Kamarata is reached by wheeled traffic, of which there is already some prospect but which is not very likely in the visible future. The end may thus be slow in coming, but it appears inevitable.

Apart from any sentimental considerations, it will be deplorable, indeed tragic, if this natural process is allowed to go on without check or guidance. On humanitarian, social, and economic grounds, it is strongly desirable in the first place that Kamarakoto culture (and these remarks apply to all of the many other tribes in a similar situation) should not be uprooted faster than the Kamarakotos can adapt themselves to new ways. This uprooting is the "natural" event and it is one that the usual agencies, religious[235] and civil, often promote rather than prevent. In the second place it is no less desirable that the useful and admirable elements of Kamarakoto culture, which will in the ordinary way disappear just as completely as the undesirable elements and probably sooner than the latter, should be saved and perpetuated.

In the promotion of health, civilization has at least an antidote to offer against the new diseases that it will introduce, and it could considerably im- [731] prove the present mortality record of the Kamarakotos. It can also guard them against famines such as are said to have occurred infrequently in the past. Aside from these points, it is hard to see how the Indians stand to gain anything by [511] being "civilized." They are remarkably happy now, poverty is unknown, and hunger and misery are not the common lot but rare historic occurrences. The Kamarakotos already know thoroughly well how to live in their own environment. No white man can teach them: on the contrary, if white men attempt to colonize and to become self-supporting in this region they are sure to find that they can do so at present only by learning the technique from the Indians. I think no impartial observer would deny that the average Kamarakoto is now mentally

235 [see footnote on p. 334, category 116 - Analyst]
[text continues on p. 281]